

Saturday Magazine.

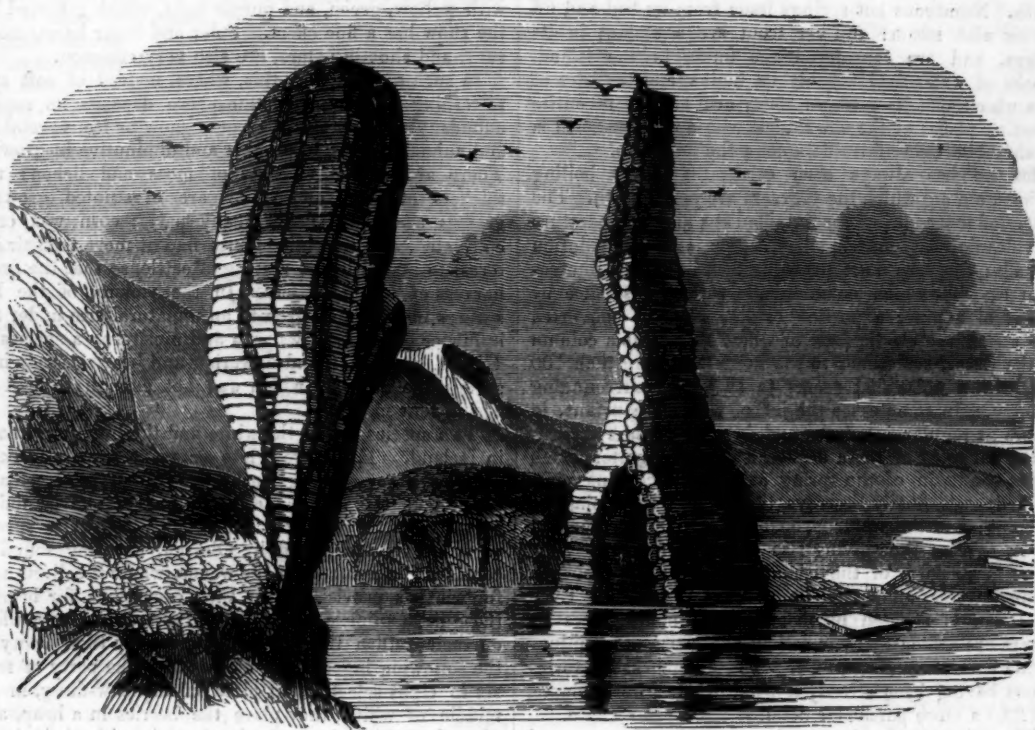
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ONE PENNY,

ICELANDIC SKETCHES. II.



ON THE COAST NEAR STAPPEN.

2. GEOGRAPHICAL SKETCH (concluded). CLIMATE—METEOROLOGICAL PHENOMENA—NATURAL PRODUCTIONS.

ONE of the most characteristic features of Icelandic scenery is formed by the numerous fiords which find their way through the rocky barrier of the coast and run far into the interior. They are all very similar in form, but vary considerably in dimensions, some being scarcely two miles wide, but extending twenty-five or thirty miles into the country, and often continued much farther by narrow vales down which the mountain rivers escape to the sea. These fiords are separated from each other by lofty ridges stretching out into the ocean, and ending in precipitous headlands. Some of them attain an elevation of nearly 4000 feet, but the average height is about 2000 feet. The rise of these mountains is so sudden, that from the top of many a precipice 1000 feet high a stone may be cast into the sea. The perpendicular walls of rock which shut in the fiords, have their summits clothed with perpetual snow or wrapped in dark clouds.

All around seems dead,—no trace of life is visible. Man and all that he produces, vanish amid the mightier works of nature. Woods, and the higher classes of the vegetable creation, are entirely wanting, and the naked rocks are too steep for even the hardy birch or stunted willow to fix their roots. No sound is heard save the billows dashing on the craggy shore, no motion seen but the cataract rushing down the rugged cliffs*.

In the midst of this sublime scenery, the Iclander takes up his abode; for here he finds grassy meadows for his cattle, and the fiords offering a favourite retreat to

the cod-fish, enable the fisherman to pursue his vocation with safety and convenience. The fiords also afford another advantage. they serve like canals to connect the interior of the island with the coast. Merchant-ships sail up them, supply the wants of the natives, and receive their produce in return.

The roads of Iceland are both difficult and dangerous: they are generally made on the ascent or descent of the lofty ridges which separate the fiords: many of them are seldom free from snow; and the traveller oppressed with heat on ascending the steep side of the hill shivers with cold on gaining the icy summit. Many of the tracks which cross these heights are better adapted to the chamois than to men and loaded horses; nevertheless, the horses find their way through the fearful ravines with remarkable sagacity, leaping from ledge to ledge, or sliding down amidst the crumbling fragments. But accidents do occur, and then the horse and his rider are hurled over the precipice, and meet with instant death. No wonder then that the passage by the fiords, where practicable, is preferred: when one boat will transport more goods than thirty horses could do along the miserable roads.

Many of the rivers of Iceland issue from glaciers, and are rendered white by particles of clay or pumice. Some of them are of great magnitude and rapidity, and present a singular appearance on issuing from beneath the snow, and bearing with them immense masses of ice. Their course is generally short.

The other rivers are too rapid to be navigable, and this rapidity often gives rise to noble waterfalls, or suc-

* Edinburgh Cabinet Library. Article, 'Iceland.'

cessions of cascades; and often where the snow is screened from the sun it is formed into fantastic arches, through which the dark waters pursue their troubled course.

The broken surface of the island does not present many hollows for the formation of lakes; but there are a few, of which the Myvatn in the north is the most remarkable. It has been named from the swarms of mosquitos which abound on its shores. Its greatest length is seven miles, and its circumference about twenty: the stony floods which the neighbouring volcanoes have from time to time poured into it have greatly diminished its depth. Numerous hot springs issue from its bed and fill the air with steam: and yet trout are abundant in its waters, and are considered the finest in the island. Flocks of water-fowl inhabit its banks and the isles of lava which spot its surface: these also are the favourite breeding places of the eider duck, whose delicate down is a valuable article of traffic among the islanders.

Iceland has always been celebrated for its boiling springs, among which the Geysers are best known. The waters of these springs, maintained at a high temperature by volcanic heat, contain silica, which is held in solution by soda: they are most probably contained in subterranean cavities, which communicate with the surface by means of a pipe: a portion of the water is converted into steam, the elastic force of which throws up a column of the water, sometimes to the height of more than 100 feet, with a noise that seems to shake the surrounding country. In some cases the jet of water is constant, in others at regular intervals, and in a third class irregularly; but most of them deposit a silicious matter which forms the basin of the spring and the descending pipe. This deposit finally destroys the springs by closing up the pipe; and the water probably forces a new opening for its egress: thus giving rise to a new spring. They occur in all parts of the island, and frequently send up boiling water amidst fields of perpetual ice. Even the ocean is affected by them, and in many places its waters are heated by their action, and cause much injury to the nets of the fishermen. These remarkable formations having been already noticed in our First Volume, (p. 25,) a more particular detail is unnecessary here.

The climate of this island resembles the stern and rugged features of its surface. Winter follows so closely on summer that the other two seasons can scarcely be said to exist. The natives reckon their summer from the Thursday between the 18th and 24th of April, and their winter from the Friday between the same days of October; but it often happens that the cold of winter penetrates far into the summer, so that even in June the fords present roads of ice over which both man and horse may safely pass. The cold of winter is variable, but very severe; and it has been remarked that the coldest winters throughout Europe are the mildest in Iceland and Greenland. The longest day in the south of the island is 20 hours, and in the north, more than 23½; while from May to September there is no night. The sun is not seen at the winter solstice; but the refracted rays give a full light. In the height of summer the sun appears always above the horizon, but although so long visible, the rays, on account of their obliquity, produce but little heat. During the long nights of winter the whiteness of the snow, which reflects the light of the moon and stars, together with the brilliant fires of the aurora, serve to illuminate this dreary land.

In common with other islands, the weather here is very fitful; seldom remaining settled for two or three days. Violent winds are more injurious to vegetation than extreme cold; because they tear off the green covering from the earth, loosen masses of rock, and hurl them into the valleys, and sometimes waft such quantities of sand and ashes from the central districts as to darken the sky and destroy the pastures in the north. But the winds have also their advantages: they dispel those dense fogs that hover over the land and deprive it

of the blessings of a bright sun and a blue sky. Rain and hail are frequent. Thunder is seldom heard; lightning is more common and often fatal, especially near volcanic mountains. Sometimes in a winter's night, during a strong wind and drifting snow, the whole sky is illuminated, as if on fire, by a continual lightning which moves slowly. This phenomenon causes much dread to the natives, because it frightens their cattle, many of which fall over the rocks in running about to avoid the apparent danger. The *Aurora Borealis* is also seen in great beauty; sometimes covering the sky with yellow, green, and purple light, which reflected by the snow has a fine effect. Solar and lunar halos, mock suns, and shooting-stars, are also very common.

In such a climate as this, where, instead of soft and refreshing showers, the atmosphere deposits its superabundant moisture in the form of snow or ice, vegetables and animals are few in number and diminutive in growth. There are several varieties of moss and lichen: the thickets of birch and willow are of stunted growth: grasses are abundant in many parts: corn was once cultivated, but the inhabitants find it more to their interest to attend to the rearing of cattle, so that the great harvest of Iceland is hay. In the vicinity of the hot springs many plants grow to an unnatural size under the influence of constant warmth and moisture: a species of *Chara* has been found flowering and bearing seeds in a spring, the water of which was hot enough to boil an egg in four minutes.

Two species of fox, the white and the blue, are known in Iceland. The large white or polar bear is an occasional visitant floating on an icy raft from Greenland, he attacks the cattle and commits great havoc unless speedily destroyed by the inhabitants. A white species of mouse is mentioned by Olafsen, as being found in considerable numbers in the woods, where it collects nuts for winter's provision. In their excursions for berries, these little animals have often to cross rivers, over which on their return they are said to convey their booty by the following ingenious contrivance:—the party of from six to eight select a flat piece of dry cow-dung, in the middle of which they place the berries in a heap, and, after launching it, embark upon it with their heads joined in the middle, and their tails pendant, like rudders in the stream. In this manner the passage is accomplished, though the unstable bark is often wrecked, when the navigators must save themselves by swimming and lose their whole cargo. The ingenuity of this account has caused it to be doubted; but it has been confirmed by Henderson.

Six or seven kinds of seal are known in Iceland: they are of great importance to the natives, on account of their flesh and oil, while their skins are used for clothing and form an article of export. Those animals are easily tamed, and soon become attached to their keeper. Their body is long and conical: their feet, enveloped in the skin, appear like fins. They are very inquisitive animals, and are attracted often to their destruction, by any new object. They will follow a boat for a long time, apparently wondering at the strange sight: and they are frequently enticed far inland by the light of some cottage window. The morse or walrus occasionally visits Iceland. On the coast are found whales, the white fish, the dolphin, the porpoise, the fierce grampus, and the sea unicorn. The last named animal has no teeth, but instead of them a single tusk, wreathed in a spiral groove, and directed forwards. The length of this tusk is eight or ten feet; it is very hard and surpasses ivory in its qualities: it forms a valuable article of export, and was formerly sold at an exorbitant price, as the horn of the fabulous land unicorn. Both the flesh and the skin of this animal furnish food to the natives.

The winged tribes are somewhat numerous in Iceland; but many of them are migratory and are found widely diffused over the northern regions. Our space will not

allow us to mention more than one of the winged visitors to this dreary island; and we select the wild or whistling swan. This noble bird is five feet long; and, when the wings are extended, eight feet broad: its plumage is pure white, slightly tinged on the head with orange yellow. It sometimes remains all the winter in Iceland; and during the long dark nights is heard the wild song of troops of these birds as they pass from place to place. This song is thought to be a kind of signal or watchword, to prevent the dispersion of the party, and is described as remarkably pleasant, resembling the tones of a violin, though somewhat higher, each note occurring after a distinct interval. This midnight music is said to precede a thaw, and hence the Icelanders are well pleased to hear it. In summer these birds abound in many of the lakes, rivers, marshes, and small ponds: here they lay their eggs in spring and the natives go in search of them; and in August, when the old birds moult and the young cannot yet fly, many persons go to collect the feathers and catch the birds. The flesh, which is dry and tough, is eaten, but the quills and skins are valuable articles of export.

The inclemency of an Icelandic winter is often increased by the vast shoals of ice which the waves bear from Greenland to its shores; but the same cause which produces this disadvantage brings also a compensation for many privations: every year vast heaps of drift wood are cast ashore sufficient to supply the natives with fuel and building material.

This timber appears to come from two directions, the current from the northern coast of Asia bringing it from the east, and the American or Mexican gulf stream from the south-west. Owing to the general course of these, it is found in greatest quantities on the north-western side. The firs in Strande Syssel enjoy it in most abundance, and in many of them it is seen piled up several yards thick, partly covered with sand or wild plants, and is often quite fresh. Trees with their bark and roots are also very commonly found in good condition, having, from being enveloped in ice, either before or soon after they fell into the water, been preserved from injury and waste. The wood on the north-western coast consists of the pine, Scotch fir, lime-tree, birch, willow, mahogany, Campeachy wood, and the cork-tree; on the east are found Scotch fir, silver fir, birch, willow, and juniper; on the coast near Langanes, the Scotch and silver fir prevail. Associated with these come dead whales and seals, which are a great prize to the poor inhabitants. These have probably been killed by the icebergs, which move faster than a boat can row, and, when dashing together, sometimes by their friction set fire to the wood contained in them.

THERE are a thousand objects, such as quills, reeds, the grasses, &c., which show that strength is uniformly given by Nature, with the least possible expense of material. It was this fact to which Galileo appealed, when he was arraigned before the inquisition on the charge of atheism. If, said he, there were nothing else in nature to teach me the existence of a Deity, even this straw would be sufficient. Such a straw, if made solid, and yet of the same quantity of material, would be so thin, that it would bend and break under the slightest weight; whereas, in its present form, it is able to support an ear, which is heavier than the whole stalk.—DR. POTTER.

THAT ignorance of our future destiny in life, of which we sometimes complain, is a signal proof of the goodness of our Creator. He hides from us the view of futurity, because the view would be dangerous and overpowering. It would either dispirit us with visions of terror, or intoxicate us by the disclosure of success. The veil which covers from our sight the events of this and of succeeding years, is a veil woven by the hand of mercy. Our "times are in his hand," and we have reason to be glad that in his hand they are kept, shut out from our view. Submit to his pleasure as an Almighty Ruler we must; because we cannot resist Him: equal reason there is for trusting in Him as a guardian under whose disposal we are safe.—BLAIR.

THE BRANDY PEST.

No. II.

An Accident.

ABOUT three miles from the inn where we dined, the road passed over a hill, and led to a village at the foot of it. As we were descending this hill, our postilion madly whipped on the horses, and our carriage was suddenly overturned. We reached the ground unhurt, but the postilion fell with great violence; fortunately the horses were soon stopped, by some villagers, who helped us out of the carriage. The postilion, bleeding and senseless, was conveyed to an inn, where we made up our minds to stop also.

"I expected this," said Fridolin, on the way to the inn; "the fellow drank too much at the place where we dined. He is intoxicated: his glowing red face, and his swearing, showed it evidently."

About a quarter of an hour passed before the postilion recovered his consciousness. Fridolin examined and treated him with great care. The poor fellow had broken a rib and his left arm, and his face was much bruised.

This accident obliged us to remain at the inn until the carriage was repaired, and in the evening we enjoyed the company of some officers, and other respectable people of the village. We were in our dear Switzerland. The company talked much about the existing institutions and governments. They all approved of them, with the exception of the landlord, who interrupted them often, saying, "It is really too bad of our governments to allow the increase of ale-houses and brandy-shops, by which the dissoluteness of the country increases. In some of our towns every fifth house is an inn or an ale-house. Here in our small village, with scarcely six hundred inhabitants, there are seven public-houses, which are full of guests every evening."

There is sometimes in the life of a man, a time, a day, in which, by a remarkable coincidence of circumstances, the same thing occurs more than once, or in which several events happen that appear to have the same bearing. We ought to pay more than usual attention to circumstances thus pressed upon our notice by repetition, for in such coincidences the willing observer may discern the warning or encouraging voice of Providence.

Such was the case with me. Dr. Walter's description of the dangers of brandy-drinking, the letters by which I had learnt the dreadful consequences of this bad habit, the danger to which our lives had been exposed, through the intoxication of our postilion—all this, happening in one day, made a deep impression upon me, and confirmed me in my resolution to give up drinking spirits for ever.

But this day had yet other consequences upon my future life.

A Conversation such as is seldom heard in an Inn.

"It is jealousy of trade, landlord, jealousy of trade, that makes you speak thus!" cried one of the guests, laughing.

"No, sir," answered the landlord, "I do not speak from selfishness, I feel compassion for the poor people. Every year they become more dissolute and disorderly on account of the increase of public-houses; for the more numerous the opportunities of seduction, the more numerous are the seduced; the more public-houses, the more drunkards. Read the newspapers! I have noticed many things in them. In the canton of Berne, for instance, five years ago, there were already more than 900 public-houses: there are now more than 1500. Five years ago, I tell you, three to four million gallons of wine, and about 248,000 gallons of brandy, were imported into the same canton. You think this is a great deal; but now nearly 7,000,000 gallons of wine, and about 500,000 gallons of brandy, are consumed! Besides this, many persons make brandy for their own use out of the husks or pressed grapes, apples, or pears, or out of potatoes. Many persons drink brandy in the morning before breakfast, at noon, and again in the evening. Even boys drink ardent spirits. The same is the case in the cantons of Freiburg, Solothurn, Aargau, Zürich, and others. Once the canton of Basel-Landschaft sold an immense quantity of cherry-brandy to France. Though that commerce is now at an end, still the distilling of the brandy continues. What do the peasants of Basel do with it? They consume *themselves* the whole quantity every year."

"It is jealousy of trade, landlord, nothing but jealousy

of trade," repeated the same merry guest; "you exaggerate, it is not half so bad as you say."

An old gentleman, who sat opposite to him, raised his voice, and spoke thus, very seriously: "The evil is worse than you think, or perhaps, know. Have you not been yourself a witness of the accident that happened to these gentlemen, caused by the intoxication of their postilion? Such accidents, owing to drunkenness, are not at all rare in our days. Where is there a village or a town in the country, where you do not meet with drunkards reeling through the streets, quarrelling, fighting, and even killing each other? How many fires are occasioned by the carelessness or thoughtlessness of intoxicated persons! The poverty of the lower classes increases strikingly with the increased use of wine, ale, or brandy. Debauchery, idleness, and thieving, become more frequent every year. The parish is overburdened with orphans and deserted children. If an epidemic disease breaks out, all is misery and destruction, in spite of the great number of physicians. People die like flies, for they are ripe for the grave through their daily use of spirits. The government know all this; they see it every day, and yet do nothing against it. Instead of stopping the source of the evil they dig ponds and lakes to receive its victims. They build immense workhouses, hospitals, and houses of correction, and fill them with drunkards; but they do not reflect upon the origin of all this misery. They give licences for ale-houses and brandy-shops, and so let misery run unbridled over the country."

While he thus spoke, the other guests were all attentively silent. The landlord nodded his approbation, and said: "It is but too true, your worship!" (for the speaker was a justice of the peace.)

No one had listened with greater attention than Fridolin. "I have been absent more than four years," said he, "and I am both astonished and grieved to hear such facts. No corruption, debauchery, nor licentiousness, ought ever to be heard of in Switzerland. And yet, gentlemen, what else is the cause of the misery and infamy of our country, but the avidity and covetousness of the dealers in ardent spirits, who thus distribute *poison* through the whole country."

Our landlord shook his head and replied: "By your leave, sir, I will agree, that the greediness for gain of the retailers of spirits contributes much to the misery and impoverishment of families and parishes. But if you call brandy a poison, the band of poisoners is much larger than that of landlords, alehouse-keepers, and dealers. I will not say anything more. It is more becoming for your worship to speak than for me."

He addressed these last words to the old gentleman who had spoken before. Fridolin, too, turned towards the justice of the peace and requested him to explain, how it came to pass that brandy, in the course of these twenty years, had become such a common, and indeed, unfortunately, such a daily beverage.

The Speech of an old Justice of the Peace, worthy of every one's attention.

"Do not wonder at it," said he; "it is not the fault either of the revolution, or of the foreign soldiers who came into our country, or of that licentiousness of the people which is occasioned by war. Neither is the number of inns and taverns the cause of the increase of brandy-drinking. Were all the inns and taverns to be abolished, the number of brandy-drinkers would not diminish. The chief cause is the cheapness of brandy, and the facility of preparing it. It is prepared, in distilleries and in private houses, out of the husks of grapes and fruit, out of potatoes, cherries, plums, gentian, wheat, rye, and barley; almost everything can be used to make that liquor, which, as that gentleman said, *empoisons* by degrees and imperceptibly, the health of human beings.

"But our landlord is quite in the right when he says that the band of poisoners consists not alone of brandy-distillers and of the dealers in that poison. There are other persons besides, who seduce the ignorant people to brandy-drinking; who destroy the health of men, women and children; who promote poverty and licentiousness; who fill the prisons, the mad-houses, the hospitals, the houses of correction, with miserable victims; and these are—the wealthy, the respectable, the so-called well-educated people. They set before their guests strong wines, spirits before and after dinner, spirits at supper. Every friend or stranger who comes to them is encouraged and incited to drink. There are amongst the rich and fashionable class as many brandy-drinkers as amongst the poor and the peasantry; therefore we see so many

sickly, weak persons amongst them, who have the physician constantly in their house, and whose children are weak and degenerate. But these so-called well-educated people dispense brandy also amongst the lower people. They give it to their labourers; they give it to their threshers and hay-makers; they give it to their washerwomen; they offer it to those who bring them their rents; and, in short, they take advantage of every opportunity to make people drink. They imagine, perhaps, in their ignorance, that by this means they give more pleasure and strength to their labourers. Yes, it is true, in the first hour the brandy excites their spirits, they work merrily; but, in the following hours, faintness, debility, indolence, and sleep overcome them. It is a fact, that out of two equally strong labourers, he who abstains from brandy works better, and with more prudence and reflection than he who takes it. The latter is like a traveller, who, in the beginning, runs fast, and leaves others behind him, but soon he becomes tired, and must remain behind those who walk steadily."

A little man, who had the appearance of a wealthy farmer, interrupted the justice of the peace in his speech, and said: "Right! right! I know it well. Four sober labourers, who quench their thirst with water and milk, work more in a day than five brandy-drinkers. I allow no brandy on my farm; and I am very well without it. A brandy-drinker saves no money either for himself or for his family."

The justice of the peace resumed: "I know, neighbour, that you have dismissed every one who is fond of brandy, and you have derived advantage from so doing. No liquor is to be found in your house. Oh may all honest persons, all intelligent and true friends of the people, imitate your example! But if wealthy families, manufacturers, officers, even magistrates and teachers, offer to their children, to their workmen, to their pupils, the bad example of spirit-drinking, what can we expect from the common people? Yes, they are the poisoners of the community; they are the mischief-makers! And, what is worse, gentlemen, the very men to whom we intrust the superintendence of the public welfare, contribute, by their ignorance or their thoughtlessness, to the diffusion of all those evils, vices, and crimes which originate in the daily use of strong liquors in our deplorable country; of poverty and gambling, of lust and dissipation, of theft and fighting, of weakness in offspring, and of all sorts of diseases. Some of our clergymen preach on the decay of religion, lament over the increasing immorality; but they have not yet destroyed the secret source of vice, namely, the daily use of fermented and distilled drinks. Indeed, it is not enough to preach, to lament, and to admonish. Do we not, in this wretched brandy-drinking country of ours, often see unworthy priests who are drunkards? do we not see even the teachers of youth and professors addicted to drinking, and exposing themselves to the scorn and derision of their scholars? But, gentlemen, the vice has become already so general amongst us, that it is no more regarded as a vice; it is hardly regarded as a weakness; has it not become a proverb to say, 'To be tipsy honourably shall be prohibited by nobody?' Our doctors ought to take care of the health of the people. They ought to be the first, if they were conscientious, benevolent men, to warn the community of the abuse of strong liquors; and, I repeat it, daily use is an abuse. They best know to how many bodily diseases this daily use leads. They know how many diseases are developed by the poison of brandy; but some of our doctors, I really believe, have more anxiety to get patients than to preserve the health of the people; they do not warn us; they do not prohibit the liquors so advantageous for themselves, in the houses which they frequent; at least not in the houses of the rich. Is this carelessness, or avarice? And, gentlemen, what shall I say of our governors and legislators, amongst whom there are drunkards, and dealers in poisonous spirits? I will not speak of magistrates, who, when they have taken a glass too much, often commit cruelty and injustice.

"Finally, let me call your attention to the perverse, immoral institutions and laws of our country; they permit dancing on four or five Sundays during the year, but limit this abuse, from a pretended regard to public morals, while they openly countenance, if they do not actually encourage, drinking on every Sunday throughout the year. Instead of making brandy dear by taxes and tolls, they charge more for the mild wines, which are much less obnoxious, and thus drive the poorer people to the use of spirits. Thus our governors and rulers favour the poisoning of the people, and the ruin of their health and morality. Yes, gentlemen, these persons call themselves the fathers of their country,

the friends of the people, and yet they make more widows and orphans, more cripples and sickly persons, more suicides and madmen, than perhaps a war would have made."

When the speaker was silent, the landlord exclaimed, "Go on! that is all truth, and no exaggeration."

"Well," said the magistrate, "why repeat what you yourself have said? By brandy-drinking men become frivolous, spendthrifts, lazy, poor, and shameless. Then arise complaints of the deficiency of good poor-houses. But who has promoted the poverty? The legislature! Poverty and intemperance render tenfold the number of offenders against the law—thieves, swindlers, and other offenders. We find few criminals who do not embolden themselves by a dram, before committing their crimes. The highwayman and the thief, before undertaking an enterprise, swallow a dram. In judicial examinations hitherto, this has been too little inquired into. But question each man in the prisons and houses of correction, and you will find more than half of them to be brandy-drinkers. And then we complain that the houses of correction become too small for the number of offenders! Who, then, is answerable for the increase of offences and of criminals? The *law-makers* are the first cause of the public corruption. But no more on that head."

Then a gentleman in a black dress rose, to whom the title of counsellor had been given during the evening. He said, "Your worship has forgotten one thing! We have a law which *favours drunkards* more than sober people. By this law it is ordained that the drunkenness of a criminal shall be considered in *mitigation of punishment*, because not being master of his reason, he cannot be made entirely answerable for his offence. But is it not a crime in the first place for a man to confuse his reason, to contaminate his human dignity, and to lower himself down to a brute? In England and in North America they understand legislation better. There the previous stupefaction of the mind, by means of heating liquors, is not considered a reason for the mitigation of the punishment, but all offences committed in drunkenness are punished as if perpetrated in a state of sobriety. Every one can avoid placing himself in a state in which he no longer knows what serious consequences he hazards, but it takes a long time before we in Switzerland arrive to the perception of the simplest truth. He who is sober knows, that when he is in a state of intoxication, he cannot one minute answer for his actions in the next; that he cannot warrant whether or not the next hour will find him guilty of treachery, of adultery, of murder, of having ruined his fortune through gambling, and plunged his whole family into the deepest pitch of misery! The demon of brandy opens before him the broad path of crime and misery, it drags him laughing to infamy, to prison, to the convict's chains, to the scaffold! When sober, he knows very well that all this may happen to him as soon as he loses his reason by getting drunk, and yet he drinks, and drinks, till he has lost it! He commits a crime, and now intoxication is made the ground of a milder punishment for him than for the sober!"

This conversation, which caused much debate, lasted till late at night, and was not finished when I and my friend Dr. Walter went to bed.

ON VISITING MELROSE ABBEY AFTER AN ABSENCE OF SIXTEEN YEARS.

Yon setting sun, that slowly disappears,
Gleams a memento of departed years:
Aye, many a year is gone, and many a friend,
Since here I saw the Autumn sun descend.
Ah! one is gone, whose hand was lock'd in mine,
In this that traces now the sorrowing line;
And now alone, I scan the mouldering tombs,
Alone I wander through the vaulted glooms,
And list, as if the echoes might retain
One ling'ring cadence of her varied strain.
Alas! I heard that melting voice decay,
Heard seraph tones in whispers die away;
I mark'd the tear presageful fill her eye,
And quivering speak, I am resigned to die.
Ye stars, that through the fretted windows shed
A glimmering beam athwart the mighty dead,
Say to what sphere her sainted spirit flew,
That thither I may turn my longing view,
And wish, and hope, some tedious seasons o'er,
To join a long lost friend, and part no more.

SIR MATTHEW HALE. I.



IMMORTAL HALE! for deep discernment praised,
And sound integrity, not more than famed
For sanctity of manners undefiled.—COWPER

WHEN the venerable and learned Bishop Burnet undertook to write the life of Sir Matthew Hale, he stated the following reasons, among others, which incited him to the task.

In the age in which we live, religion and virtue have been proposed and defended with such advantages, with that great force of reason, and those persuasions, that they can hardly be matched in former times; yet after all this, there are but few much wrought on by them, which, perhaps, flows from this, among other reasons, that there are not so many excellent patterns set out, as might, both in a shorter and more effectual manner, recommend that to the world which discourses do but coldly: the wit and style of the writers being more considered than the argument which they handle, and therefore the proposing virtue and religion in such a model, may perhaps, operate more than the perspective of it can do; and for the history of learning, nothing does so preserve and improve it, as the writing the lives of those who have been eminent in it.

The subject of our present memoir was born on the 1st of November, 1609, at Alderley, in Gloucestershire. His father had been educated for the bar, but he "gave over the practice of the law, because he could not understand the reason of giving colour in pleading, which, as he thought, was to tell a lie." In his infancy Matthew lost both his parents, and was brought up under the directions of a kinsman, who being attached to the doctrines of the Puritans, placed Matthew under the care of teachers holding similar opinions; and thus were probably founded those strict principles of thought and action, which afterwards distinguished him. At the age of seventeen he became a student of Magdalen Hall, Oxford, where he was remarkable, as at school, for proficiency in his studies. He did not, however, escape the temptations to which a young and ardent mind is likely to be exposed in so public a place as a university. He rejected the precise habiliments of the Puritan for more fashionable attire: he preferred the theatre to the retirement of his study: and the lessons of a fencing-master to the lectures of his tutor: and so strongly was he enamoured with martial exercises, that when his tutor was about to depart for the Low Countries as chaplain

to Lord Vere, young Hale resolved to accompany him, in order "to trail a pike in the Prince of Orange's army."

But he was happily deterred from gratifying this war-like freak by one of those events called *accidents*, but which should rather be regarded as *Providential means* and *opportunities* of escaping temptation, or turning from an evil way. Young Hale was engaged in a lawsuit relative to his property, and was induced to visit London to attend to it. Having retained Serjeant Granville, he became acquainted with that learned man, who soon remarked the many valuable qualities of his client, and succeeded in persuading him to relinquish all idea of the military service, and devote his powers to the study of the law. In November, 1629, he was admitted a student of Lincoln's Inn. The ardour with which he had so latterly pursued pleasure, was now directed to his studies, to which he applied such method and industry, as could not fail to command success. He assumed a sober, student-like dress, and for some years devoted sixteen hours each day to study. But, notwithstanding this change, the love of convivial society was a temptation strong within him, to which he sometimes yielded, till an event occurred, which powerfully affected him. Being present at a party where wine was drunk to excess, one of the company became insensible, and the most serious apprehensions were entertained for his life. Hale was so much affected by this event, that he retired into another room, fell upon his knees, and prayed earnestly to God that his friend might recover, and that he himself might be pardoned for having participated in such excesses. At the same time he made a vow never more to be guilty of similar intemperance, nor again while he lived, to drink a health. Most persons under the influence of some powerful and painful mental impression, are ready to make good resolutions:—but there is too often this difference between Matthew Hale and them—he kept his during the rest of his life—they forget their's when time has weakened the impression, or new pleasures have effaced it. Happy would it be for us, if, adopting the maxim of an old writer, *we would do when we are well, what we so often resolve to do when we are ill!*

It was probably under the influence of these good resolutions that Hale composed the scheme of daily employments, which we insert below*. May we hope that every reader will carefully study it, and, if possible, adopt it for his own use. The early impressions of Hale now returned with full force, and, (like young persons generally, apt to fall into extremes,) he became so

austere as to neglect his personal appearance, so much so, that being impressed as a fit person to serve his majesty, he was only released by being recognised by a passing acquaintance.

The zeal and ability of Hale attracted the notice of Noy, the Attorney-General, who undertook to direct his studies, and interested himself so warmly in his progress, that Hale was distinguished amongst his fellow-students by the name of Young Noy. Under such patronage Hale soon became known: his merits also procured him the friendship of the learned Selden, and John Vaughan, afterwards Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas. Hale was peculiarly struck with the varied acquirements and instructive conversation of Selden, and by his example was induced to extend his own studies to literature and science. His posthumous works show the diligence with which he pursued mathematics and natural philosophy. He also devoted considerable attention to the study of medicine, anatomy, ancient history, and chronology; but his principal delight was in the study of divinity, to which he was probably led by early associations. All these pursuits, any one of which would suffice to occupy the working-hours of an ordinary mind, Hale called his diversions, with which he refreshed himself from the fatigues of professional studies.

Like many men of ardent genius, (says Mr. Roscoe,) he possessed the valuable faculty of applying the powers of his strong and active mind to various subjects, without that distraction of thought, to which persons of inferior capacity are subject. His indefatigable industry also enabled him to accomplish tasks which, to the indolent, would seem incredible. He rose early in the morning, and as he sacrificed no portion of the day to idle society, nor even indulged in any useless correspondence by letter, he found leisure to apply to his various literary pursuits without injury to his professional prospects. His temperance also was highly favourable to mental occupations; and so sparing was he in his diet, that his meals never prevented him from immediately resuming the labours which they had interrupted. It is, perhaps, to the variety of studies in which Hale engaged, that his extensive learning is to be attributed. A complete change in the nature of the objects upon which the mind is engaged, is almost equivalent to repose, and is, perhaps, equally salutary to the mental health.

At the time when Hale was called to the bar, the civil dissensions which were beginning to harass the country, made it "no easy thing for a man to preserve his integrity and to live securely:" he resolved, however, to take no part in the political contests of the times. The only interest which he displayed in public affairs, was in relieving the distresses of both parties.

The strict neutrality thus professed by Hale, at a period when so much was at stake on both sides, is not a subject for applause. When the violent and the indiscreet of all parties are roused to action, it does not become the moderate and sensible portion of society to remain unmoved, and to preserve their individual repose, at the expense of the tranquillity of the state. At a later period of his life, Hale appears to have been sensible of this error, and exerted the influence which his high character gave him, in endeavouring to place the liberties of his country upon a sure foundation.

This political neutrality and the esteem in which he was held by both parties, made him a desirable advocate to those of the prerogative party, who were tried for political offences. In many of the great state trials of the period, he appeared as counsel, and on one of these occasions on being threatened by the attorney-general for appearing against the government, he replied, "that he was pleading in defence of those laws, which they declared they would maintain and preserve, and he was doing his duty to his client, so that he was not to be daunted with threatenings."

After the execution of Charles I. several of the judges resigned their seats, and one of the vacancies in the Court of Common Pleas was offered to Hale, as it is supposed, from a desire of Cromwell to remove from the bar a man whose honest and resolute character might

* MORNING.—I. To lift up the heart to God, in thankfulness for renewing my life.

II. To renew my covenant with God in Christ; I. By renewed acts of faith, receiving Christ, and rejoicing in the height of that relation.

2. Resolution of being one of his people, doing him allegiance.

III. Adoration and Prayer.

IV. Setting a watch over my own infirmities and passions, over the snares laid in our way. *Perimus licitis.*

DAY EMPLOYMENT.—There must be an employment—two kinds:—

I. Our ordinary calling, to serve God in it. It is a service to Christ, though never so mean. *Cicero.* iii. Here, Faithfulness, Diligence, Cheerfulness. Not to overlay myself with more business than I can bear.

II. Our spiritual employments. Mingle somewhat of God's immediate service in this day.

REFRESHMENTS.—I. Meat and drink, moderation, seasoned with somewhat of God.

II. Recreations: 1. Not our business. 2. Suitable. No games, if given to covetousness or passion.

IF ALONE.—I. Beware of wandering, vain, lustful thoughts; fly from thyself, rather than entertain these.

II. Let thy solitary thoughts be profitable; view the evidences of thy salvation, the state of thy soul, the coming of Christ, thy own mortality, it will make thee humble and watchful.

COMPANY.—Do good to them. Use God's name reverently. Beware of leaving an ill impression of ill example. Receive good from them, if more knowing.

EVENING.—Cast up the accounts of the day. If aught amiss, beg pardon. Gather resolution of more vigilance. If well, bless the mercy and grace of God that hath supported thee.

The above notes were copied by Bishop Burnet from the M.S.S. of Hale "in the same simplicity in which he writ it for his own private use." "These notes have an imperfection in the wording of them, which shows that they were only intended for his privacies."

prove injurious to his service. He hesitated to accept the proffered dignity: his practice was considerable, and he had doubts as to the propriety of acting under a commission from the existing government; but having satisfied his scruples by conversing with two eminent divines he came to the resolution, "that as it was absolutely necessary to have justice and property kept up at all times, it was no sin to take a commission from usurpers."

Some time after he had exercised his judicial functions, he began to entertain doubts with regard to the lawfulness of presiding at the trial of criminals, on the ground that the government which granted his commission had no right to inflict punishment. He accordingly refused to sit on the crown side at the assizes. This resolve was probably not displeasing to the government, since the judge had on more than one occasion displayed a stern determination to favour justice rather than the wishes of those in power. Soon after he was raised to the bench two soldiers were tried before him under the following circumstances. An inhabitant of Lincoln, who had been one of the royal party, walking in the fields with a fowling piece in his hands, was met by one of the soldiers, who informed him that the Protector had ordered that none of the King's party should carry arms, and then attempted to force away the weapon. The man resisted, and throwing the soldier down, beat him and left him. The soldier having met one of his comrades, prevailed upon him to accompany him for the purpose of taking revenge. They accordingly watched for the man, and on his approach the soldier again demanded the fowling-piece, and while they were again struggling for its possession, the other soldier, coming behind the man, pierced him with his sword. For this act the men were tried; one of them was found guilty of manslaughter, and the other of murder. At the trial, Colonel Whaley, who was in command of the garrison, came into court, and addressing the bench, urged that the man was killed for disobeying the Protector's orders, and that the soldier had done his duty. The judge, however, was neither convinced by the colonel's arguments nor daunted by his threats; and passing judgment on the prisoner, ordered him for immediate execution, lest a reprieve should be granted. In this, however, he certainly exceeded the bounds of his duty as a judge. Upon another occasion, Hale also displayed a remarkable degree of moral courage and a love of justice. On being informed that the Protector had ordered a jury to be returned to try a cause in which he was particularly interested, the judge called upon the sheriff to explain the matter. The sheriff knew nothing about it, but referred to the undersheriff, who admitted that the jury had been returned by an order from Cromwell. Hale, having pointed out the statute which directs that every jury shall be returned by the sheriff or his lawful officer, dismissed the jury and refused to try the cause. On his return from the circuit the Protector expressed his displeasure at the conduct of Hale, and told him angrily that he was not fit to be a judge: to which Hale mildly replied "it was very true."

Expectation prepareth applause with the weak, and prejudice with the stronger judgment.—The fashion of commending our friend's abilities before they come to trial, sometimes takes good effect with the common sort, who, building their belief on authority, strive to follow the conceit of their betters; but usually amongst men of independent judgments, this bespeaking of opinion breeds a purpose of stricter examination, and, if the report be answered, procures only a bare acknowledgment; whereas, if nothing be proclaimed or promised, they are perhaps content to signify their own skill in testifying another's desert. Otherwise, great wits, jealous of their credit, are ready to suppress worth in others to the advancing of their own; or, if more ingenuous, to be no further just than to forbear detraction: at the best, rather disposed to give praise upon their own accord than to make payment upon demand or challenge.—SIR HENRY WOTTON.

ON ROPES AND ROPE-MAKING.

II.

THE NATURE AND CULTIVATION OF FLAX.

THE botanical name of the flax plant is *Linum*, a word considered by some to be derived from the Greek verb *lavo*, to hold, the fibres of this plant being so remarkable for their tenacity, that its herbage has always been in the greatest estimation for the manufacture of cloth, cordage, &c.

The stem of the flax plant, which is round and hollow, grows to the height of about two feet, and then divides into several branches; these are terminated by blue flowers, consisting of five petals, and are succeeded by capsules divided within into ten cells, in each of which is inclosed a bright, slippery, elongated seed. The leaves are long, narrow, sharp-pointed, and placed alternately along the stem and branches of the plant. The plant is cultivated for the fibrous bark, bearing the name of *flax*, for the *linseed oil* expressed from the seeds; and for the *oil-cakes*, (a fattening food for cattle,) formed by the seed when the oil has been expressed. The mode of cultivation varies somewhat according as the bark or the seed is the chief object to be obtained. We shall therefore confine ourselves to that routine of operations whereby the fibrous bark is procured.

The most proper soil for flax is a deep free loam, moderately moist; especially if there be water at the depth of a foot or two beneath the surface, as is the case in Zealand, and other parts of Holland, where flax is grown of great excellence. The land requires to be rendered fine and mellow, by repeated ploughings and harrowings. Where grass land is to be broken up for this crop, it should be done in the autumn, and left exposed to the influence of the atmosphere until the early part of the following year; when it should be well pulverized and broken down by heavy harrowing, then in the course of a week or two ploughed again; in which state it may remain till the period of putting in the seed, when another light harrowing should be given, and the ploughing performed afterwards by a very light furrow. But in cases where the crop is sown after grain, or other crops that have the property of keeping the ground free from weeds, the first ploughing need not be given till January; when it may remain in that state until the early spring, being then well reduced by good harrowing and rolling; and after continuing in that state about a fortnight, the seed may either be immediately put in, or another light ploughing and harrowing be first given. The quantity of seed put in is generally about two, or two and a half bushels per English acre. The best time for sowing is about the latter end of March or the beginning of April. The best method of sowing, when the flax rather than the seed is the object of cultivation, is that of broad-cast over the surface of the ground; care being taken that the seed be dispersed as evenly as possible to prevent the plants rising in an unequal or tufty manner. It should afterwards be covered in by regular harrowing with a light common or bush harrow. When the plant is cultivated for its seed, the drill method of sowing is preferred; but this we need not dwell on, for the reason before assigned.

As soon as the crop is sufficiently up, it is benefited by a good hand-hoeing or weeding; care being taken not to injure the plants by too much treading amongst them. Flax is sometimes damaged by insects, when it is about four inches high: these, it is said, may be destroyed by a slight strewing of soot, ashes, &c., over the crop; at all events this dressing will give vigour to the flax, even if it do not kill the insects. If any weeds appear afterwards among the flax, as is generally the case, they must be very carefully rooted out. The finest flax is very liable to be beaten down in stormy weather; and to prevent this it has been proposed to fasten small ropes across the field, both lengthwise and breadthwise: these

being fastened where they intersect one another, and supported by stakes at due distances, form a kind of network, which constitutes a protection to the crop.

Much discussion has arisen among agriculturists as to the period when the plant is most fitted to be pulled up; but without entering into these discussions, we may state that when the pulling is about to take place, if the object be the flax and not the seed, the crop is pulled up by the roots, and placed in small parcels usually termed *beats*, upon the surface of the land, for exposure to the sun. It is afterwards tied up, in order to be conveyed to the place where it is to undergo the process of watering. In pulling the flax it is usual, when the seeds are to be saved, to follow a procedure somewhat different.

The watering of the flax is that process in which the stalks are steeped or exposed to moisture for a longer or shorter period. The object of this process is that of inducing the separation of the flaxy material, by exciting a slight degree of fermentation in the substance which attaches it to the stem of the plant. This flaxy exterior is called the *harl*, while the central stem or woody portion is termed the *boon* or *reed*, and it will at once be understood that the harl is that portion which yields the flaxen fibres. We stated, when describing the cultivation of hemp, that the watering is effected in one of two different ways; viz., *water-retting* and *dew-retting*, of which the first is a steeping of the plant in water for several days; while the latter is an exposure of the plant to the action of the atmosphere on a large piece of ground. The modes in which flax is treated bear so close a resemblance to these that we shall not feel it necessary to describe them. We will therefore suppose the flax stalks to have been "retted" or watered, and to have attained that state which is deemed necessary for the easy separation of the harl from the boon. The plants are then carried away from the grassy sward, and deposited in barns, till wanted to undergo the process of "breaking" or dressing, which is the separation of the harl from the boon. In some places, however, before the flax is carried to the barn, it is exposed to the heat of the sun, by being placed against a wall or paling in a slanting direction, or to the heat of a fire by being placed on hurdles or in an oven heated by refuse flax: in either case, the heat is very gently applied, and only to such an extent as will dispel any dampness that the flax may have acquired.

For breaking and separating the harl or fibre from the boon different processes are employed, according to the rudeness or completeness of the arrangements in the place where the operation is carried on. The old method of proceeding was with a *stock* and *scutcher*. The stock is a bar or rail of wood, on which the man rests the stem of flax, which he holds in the left hand; then with the right he holds a kind of triangular hammer or mallet, called a *scutcher*, with which he beats the stalk, and separates the fibre from the boon. A somewhat better means than this was the *brake*. This is a machine consisting of two levers hinged at one end, and provided with sharp teeth at their meeting edges. The flax (or hemp) being held in the left hand, and placed between the levers, the upper lever is pressed down quickly and repeatedly, the stems being dexterously moved so as to cause the boon or reed to be broken in almost every part, without cutting or injuring the fibres.

An improved form of the brake, called the foot-brake, was introduced into Scotland some years ago, by which flax is broken with much greater expedition than by the hand-brake. The foot of the workman, by stepping on a treadle, moves round a large fly wheel, which by some connecting mechanism moves one arm of a horizontal lever, so as to make the lever oscillate to and fro in a vertical direction. At the other end of this lever is suspended a piece of apparatus called the *brake-mallet*, weighing upwards of thirty pounds, at the under surface of which are two wedge-shaped cutters or knives seven-

teen inches long, three inches deep, an inch and a quarter thick at the back, and a quarter of an inch thick at the edge. These knives, being let fall suddenly by the weight of the brake-mallet, strike with considerable force on the pieces of hemp or flax, which are placed across a stand called the under-brake, provided with three wedge-shaped knives, similar to those just alluded to. As the two upper knives are fixed with the edges downwards, and the lower ones with the edges upwards, and as the upper knives, when let fall, sink between the lower ones, which are left apart for that purpose, it is evident that any stems or stalks placed *across* the knives must be completely crushed; but as the edges are by no means sharp, the fibres at the surface of each stalk are not actually cut.

The *scutching* of the hemp or flax is the separating of the fibres from the bruised or broken boon. Generally speaking, this is done by the same machine which breaks the boon, called a flax mill. In one form of flax mill, the breaking of the boon is effected by three indented rollers, placed one above the other; the middle of which, being forced quickly round, takes the other two along with it. One end of a handful of flax being by the workman directed in between the upper and middle rollers, a curved board or plate of tin behind the rollers guides the flax to return again between the middle and undermost rollers; and thus the operation is repeated till the boon is sufficiently broken. This part of the process being thus completed, the scutching next succeeds. Four arms, projecting from a perpendicular axle, are enclosed in a box placed around the axle; and this box is divided among the workmen, each having sufficient room to stand and handle his flax. The men pass the ends of the flax through slits in the upper part and sides of the box, so as to bring the flax within reach of the arms or scutchers; these latter, moving round horizontally, strike the flax across or at right angles, and so thresh out or clear it of the boon.

Various other machines have been employed for separating the fibre from the boon or core; but we do not deem it necessary to dwell farther on them here. It will suffice to say that the general action of all of them is to crush the boon within the fibre, and to beat out the small pieces resulting from this crushing.

In passing on to consider the processes of rope-making, it will be sufficient to speak only of hemp, since flax is not employed except for fine twine and cord.



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